

Message Text

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CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VICTORIA 0532

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, ECON, SHUM, SE

SUBJECT: SEYCHELLES DOMESTIC POLITICAL SCENE: "LIBERATION DAY"
COMMEMORATED

1. SEYCHELLES' GOVERNMENT COMMEMORATED FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF JUNE 5, 1977 COUP D'ETAT WHICH BROUGHT SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT F.A. RENE TO POWER WITH LOW BUDGET, AT TIMES HAP-
HAZARDLY ORGANIZED "POPULAR MANIFESTATIONS" AND MILITARY PARADE. TANZANIAN VICE PRESIDENT JUMBE, KENYAN ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS PETER KENYATTA AND HIGH-LEVEL REPRESENTATIVES FROM MOZAMBIQUE AND MAURITIUS WERE PRESENT FOR OCCASION ALONG WITH NAVAL OR AIR UNITS FROM SIX NAVIES, INCLUDING U.S.

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2. IN MAJOR STADIUM ADDRESS OUTLINING GOS POLICIES ON DOMESTIC FRONT, RENE REVIEWED ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE COUP AND RESTATED CENTRAL GOVERNMENTAL POLICIES OF IMPROVING LIVING CONDITIONS OF POOREST SECTORS OF POPULATION; EXPANSION OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES FOR ALL AND STEPS UNDERTAKEN TO DIVERSIFY AN ECONOMIC BASE WHICH IS PRESENTLY TOURISM-DEPENDENT. HE ANNOUNCED BEGINNING OF

CONSTRUCTION "WITHIN A MONTH" OF LOW COST EEC-FUNDED HOUSING PROGRAM AND REPLACEMENT OF PRIVATE MEDICAL PRACTICE BY FREE, SINGLE-STANDARD GOVERNMENT HEALTH CARE SCHEME. RENE ALSO SAID GOS WOULD INSTITUTE LAND REFORM PROGRAM UNDER WHICH GOVERNMENT WILL TAKE OVER (WITH NOMINAL COMPENSATION) AND REDISTRIBUTE LAND WHICH PRESENT OWNERS "REFUSE TO DEVELOP" AND SAID FUTURE POLICY WOULD NOT PERMIT INDIVIDUALS TO OWN MORE THAN ONE HOUSE. (NOTE: FONMIN SINON TOLD CHARGE HE DOES NOT EXPECT GOS TO IMPLEMENT NEW HOUSING OWNERSHIP POLICY FOR "VERY LONG TIME".) FINALLY, RENE ISSUED STERN WARNING AGAINST ELEMENTS ATTEMPTING TO "SABOTAGE" SOCIALIST DEVELOPMENT AND CALLED FOR DISCIPLINE AND HARD WORK. (COMMENT: STADIUM CROWD WAS SMALLER AND-- DESPITE PRESUMED POPULARITY OF NEW MEASURES WITH MASSES--FAR LESS ENTHUSIASTIC THAN JUNE 29, 1977 INDEPENDENCE DAY TURNOUT.)

3. ON JUNE 6, DR. MAXIME FERRARI WAS SHIFTED FROM POST-COUP POSITION OF MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND LAND USE TO HEAD NEWLY CREATED MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING AND HOUSING. UNDER REORGANIZATION, NUMBER OF MINISTRIES IS UNCHANGED AT SEVEN WITH AGRICULTURE REVERTING TO DEPARTMENT STATUS RESPONSIBLE DIRECTLY TO THE PRESIDENT. (COMMENT: OVER PAST SIX MONTHS, FERRARI IN EFFECT HAS SERVED AS SEYCHELLES' PRINCIPAL LINK WITH DONOR COUNTRIES AND INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES AND HAS MADE SEVERAL SUCCESSFUL VISITS TO WESTERN EUROPEAN STATES. ON JUNE 12, FERRARI DEPARTED SEYCHELLES FOR TWO-WEEK MISSION TO LIBY, UK, ITALY AND YUGOSLAVIA.)
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4. MEANWHILE, TWENTY SEYCHELLOIS DETAINED SINCE APRIL 29/30 FOR ALLEGEDLY PLOTTING COUNTER-COUP REMAIN IN PRISON WHERE THEY ARE GUARDED BY TEN-MAN CONTINGENT FROM LIBERATION ARMY. SPECIALLY CONVENED THREE-MEMBER TRIBUNAL PRESIDED OVER BY VISITING APPELATE COURT JUDGE MEETING BEHIND CLOSED DOORS JUNE 2-9 HEARD COMPLAINTS CONVEYED BY DETAINEES' LAWYERS REGARDING PRISON CONDITIONS. ACCORDING ATTORNEY, TRIBUNAL RECOMMENDED TO PRESIDENT RENE THAT DETAINEES BE RELEASED FOR LACK OF EVIDENCE. IN RECENT PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS, RENE HAS INDICATED TO SEVERAL SOURCES THAT SOME DETAINEES MAY BE RELEASED SOON.
MATTSON

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